RICH AND POOR.

A TRACT FOR THE TIMES.

BEING THOUGHTS ON LUKE XVI. 19,—23.

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, B.A.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,

RECTOR OF HELMINGHAM, SUFFOLK.

Author of "LIVING OR DEAD?"
"ASSURANCE," &c.

"In all time of our wealth,
Good Lord deliver us."
Liturgy of the Church of England.

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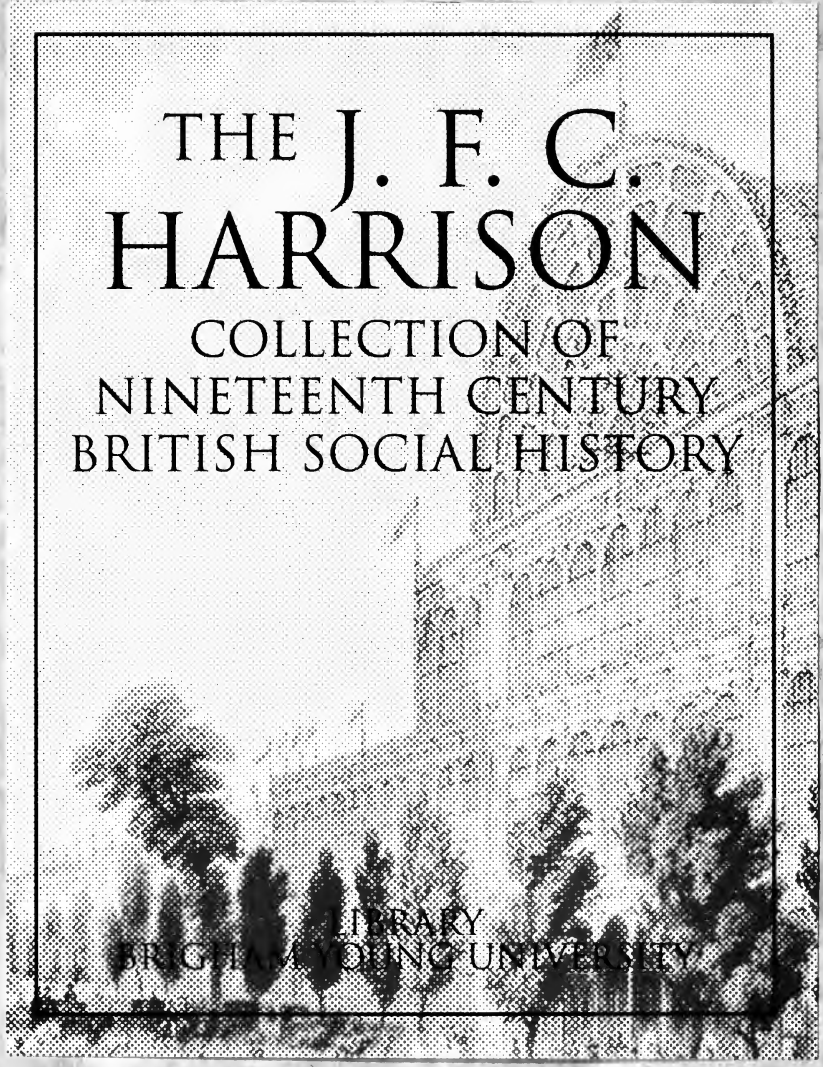
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RICH AND POOR.

LUKE XVI. 19—23.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

"And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

THERE are probably few readers of the Bible who are not familiar with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It is one of those passages of Scripture which leave an indelible impression on the mind. Like the parable of the Prodigal Son, once read it is never forgotten.

The reason of this is clear and simple. The whole parable is a most vividly painted picture. The story, as it goes on, carries our senses with it with irresistible power. Instead of readers, we become lookers on. We are witnesses of all the

events described. We see. We hear. We fancy we could almost touch. The rich man's banquet, —the purple,—the fine linen,—the gate,—the beggar lying by it,—the sores,—the dogs,—the crumbs,—the two deaths,—the rich man's burial, —the ministering angels,—the bosom of Abraham, —the rich man's fearful waking up,—the fire,— the gulf,—the hopeless remorse,—all, all stand out before our eyes in bold relief, and stamp themselves upon our minds. This is the perfection of language. This is the attainment of the famous Arabian standard, "He speaks the best who turns the ear into an eye."

But after all, it is one thing to admire the masterly composition of this parable, and quite another to receive the spiritual lessons it contains. The eye of the intellect can often see beauties while the heart remains asleep, and sees nothing at all. Hundreds read Pilgrim's Progress with deep interest, to whom the struggle for the celestial city is foolishness. Thousands are familiar with every word of the parable before us this day, who never consider how it comes home to their own case. Their conscience is deaf to the cry which ought to ring in their ears as they read, "Thou art the man." Their heart never turns to God with the solemn enquiry, "Lord, is this my picture?—Lord, is it I?"

Reader, I invite you this day to consider the leading truths which this parable is meant to teach us. I purposely omit to notice any part of it but that which stands at the head of this tract. May the Holy Ghost give you a teachable spirit, and an understanding heart, and so produce lasting impressions on your soul!

I. Observe, first of all, *how different are the conditions which God allots to different men.*

The Lord Jesus begins the parable by telling us of a rich man and a beggar. He says not a word in praise either of poverty or of riches. He describes the circumstances of a wealthy man and the circumstances of a poor man; but neither condemns the temporal position of one, nor praises that of the other.

The contrast between the two men is painfully striking. Look on this picture, and on that.

Here is one who possessed abundance of this world's good things. "He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

Here is another who has literally nothing. He is a friendless, diseased, half-starved pauper. "He lies at the rich man's gate full of sores," and begs for crumbs.

Both are children of Adam. Both came from the same dust, and belong to one family. Both are living in the same land and subjects of the same government. And yet how different is their condition!

But we must take heed that we do not draw lessons from the parable which it was never meant to teach. The rich are not always bad men, and do not always go to hell. The poor are not always good men, and do not always go to heaven. We must not rush into the extreme of supposing that it is sinful to be rich. We must not run away with the idea that there is anything wicked in the difference of condition here described, and that God intended all men to be equal. There is nothing in our Lord Jesus Christ's words to warrant any such conclusion. He simply describes things as they

are often seen in the world, and as we must expect to see them.

Universal equality is a very high-sounding expression, and a favourite idea with visionary men. Many in every age have disturbed society by stirring up the poor against the rich, and by preaching up the popular doctrine that all men ought to be equal. But so long as the world is under the present order of things, this uuiversal equality cannot be attained. Those who declaim against the vast inequality of men's lots, will doubtless never be in want of hearers; but so long as human nature is what it is, this inequality cannot be prevented.

So long as some are wise and some are foolish, —some strong and some weak,—some healthy and some diseased;—so long as children reap the fruit of their parents' misconduct;—so long as sun, and rain, and heat, and cold, and wind, and waves, and drought, and blight, and storm, and tempest are beyond man's control,—so long there always will be some rich and some poor. All the political economy in the world will never make the poor altogether cease out of the land.

Take all the property in England by force this day, and divide it equally among the inhabitants. Give every man above twenty years old an equal portion. Let all take share and share alike, and begin the world over again. Do this, and see where you would be at the end of fifty years. You would just have come round to the point where you began. You would just find things as unequal as before. Some would have worked and some would have been idle. Some would have been always careless and some always scheming.

Some would have sold and others would have bought. Some would have wasted and others would have saved. And the end would be, that some would be rich and others poor.

Reader, do not listen to those vain and foolish talkers, who say that all men were meant to be equal. They might as well tell you that all men ought to be of the same height, weight, strength and cleverness,—or that all oak trees ought to be of the same shape and size,—or that all blades of grass ought to be of the same length.

Settle it in your mind that the main cause of all the suffering you see around you, is sin. Sin is the grand curse of the enormous luxury of the rich, and the painful degradation of the poor,—of the heartless selfishness of the highest classes, and the helpless poverty of the lowest. Sin must be first cast out of the world. The hearts of all men must be renewed and sanctified. The devil must be bound. The Prince of Peace must come down and take His great power and reign. All this must be before there ever can be universal happiness, or the gulf be filled up which now divides the rich and the poor.

Beware of expecting a millennium to be brought about by any method of government, by any system of education, by any political party. Labour might and main to do good to all men. Pity your poorer brethren, and help every reasonable endeavour to raise them from their low estate. Slack not your hand from any endeavour to increase knowledge,—to promote morality,—to improve the temporal condition of the poor. But never, never forget that you live in a fallen world, that sin is all around you, and that the devil is

abroad. And be very sure that the rich man and Lazarus are emblems of two classes which will always be in the world until the Lord comes.

II. Observe in the next place, that *a man's temporal condition is no test of the state of his soul.*

The rich man in the parable appears to have been the world's pattern of a prosperous man. If the life that now is were all, he seems to have had everything that heart could wish. We know that he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. We need not doubt that he had everything else which money could procure. The wisest of men had good cause for saying, "Money answereth all things." "The rich hath many friends." (Eccles. x. 19. Prov. xiv. 20.)

But who that reads the story through can fail to see that in the highest and best sense the rich man was pitiably *poor?* Take away the good things of this life, and he had nothing left,—nothing after death,—nothing beyond the grave, nothing in the world to come. With all his riches he had no treasure laid up in heaven. With all his purple and fine linen he had no garment of righteousness. With all his boon companions he had no Friend and Advocate at God's right hand. With all his sumptuous fare he had never tasted the bread of life. With all his splendid palace he had no home in the eternal world. Without God, without Christ, without faith, without grace, without pardon, without holiness, he lives to himself for a few short years, and then goes down hopelessly into the pit. How hollow and unreal was all his prosperity! Reader, judge what I say,—*The rich man was very poor.*

Lazarus appears to have been one who had

literally nothing in the world. It is hard to conceive a case of greater misery and destitution than his. He had neither house, nor money, nor food, nor health, nor, in all probability, even clothes. His picture is one that can never be forgotten. He lay at the rich man's gate, covered with sores. He desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. Verily the wise man might well say, "The poor is hated even of his neighbour." "The destruction of the poor is their poverty." (Prov. xiv. 20 : x. 15.)

But who that reads the parable to the end can fail to see that in the highest sense Lazarus was not poor but *rich?* He was a child of God. He was an heir of glory. He possessed durable riches and righteousness. His name was in the book of life. His place was prepared for him in heaven. He had the best of clothing,—the righteousness of a Saviour. He had the best of friends,—God Himself was his portion. He had the best of food, he had meat to eat the world knew not of. And best of all he had these things for ever. They supported him in life. They did not leave him in the hour of death. They went with him beyond the grave. They were his to eternity. Surely in this point of view we may well say, not "poor Lazarus," but "rich Lazarus."

Reader, you would do well to measure all men by God's standard,—to measure them not by the amount of their income, but by the condition of their souls. When the Lord God looks down from heaven and sees the children of men, He takes no account of many things which are highly esteemed by the world. He looks not at men's

money, or lands, or titles. He looks only at the state of their souls, and reckons them accordingly. Oh! that you would strive to do likewise! Oh! that you would value grace above titles, or intellect, or gold! Often, far too often, the only question asked about a man is, "How much is he worth?" It would be well for us all to remember that every man is pitiably poor, until he is rich in faith, and rich toward God.

Wonderful as it may seem to some, I believe that all the money in the world is worthless in God's balances compared to grace! Hard as the saying may sound, I believe that a converted beggar is far more important and honourable in the sight of God than an unconverted king. The one may glitter like the butterfly in the sun for a little season, and be admired by an ignorant world; but his latter end is darkness, and misery for ever. The other may crawl through the world like a crushed worm and be despised by every one who sees him; but his latter end is a glorious resurrection and a blessed eternity with Christ. Of him the Lord says, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." (Rev. ii. 9.)

King Ahab was ruler over the ten tribes of Israel. Obadiah was nothing more than a servant in his household. Yet who can doubt which was most precious in God's sight, the servant or the king?

Ridley and Latimer were deposed from all their dignities, cast into prison as malefactors, and at length burnt at the stake. Bonner and Gardiner, their persecutors, were raised to the highest pitch of ecclesiastical greatness, enjoyed large incomes, and died unmolested in their beds. Yet who can doubt which of the two parties were on the Lord's side?

Baxter, the famous divine, was persecuted with savage malignity, and condemned to a long imprisonment by a most unjust judgment. Jeffreys, the lord chief justice, was a man of infamous character, without either morality or religion. Baxter was sent to jail and Jeffreys was loaded with honours. Yet who can doubt which was the good man of the two, the lord chief justice or the author of the "Saint's Rest?"

Reader, be very sure that riches and worldly greatness are no certain marks of God's favour. They are often on the contrary, a snare and hindrance to a man's soul. They make him love the world and forget God. What says Solomon? "Labour not to be rich." (Prov. xxiii. 4.) What says St. Paul? "They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9.)

Reader, be no less sure that poverty and trial are no certain proof of God's anger. They are blessings in disguise. They are always sent in love and wisdom. They often serve to wean man from the world. They teach him to set his affections on things above. They often show the sinner his own heart. They often make the saint fruitful in good works. What says the book of Job? "Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." (Job v. 17.) What says St. Paul? "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." (Heb. xii. 6.)

One great secret of happiness in this life is to be of a patient, contented spirit. Strive daily to realize the truth that this life is not the place of

reward. The time of retribution and recompense is yet to come. Judge nothing hastily before that time. Remember the words of the wise man, "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they." (Eccles. v. 8.) Yes! there is a day of judgment yet to come. That day shall put all in their right places. At last there shall be seen a mighty difference between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not. The children of Lazarus and the children of the rich man, shall at length be seen in their true colours, and every one shall receive according to his works.

III. Observe, in the next place, how *all classes alike come to the grave.*

The rich man in the parable died, and Lazarus died also. Different and divided as they were in their lives, they had both to drink of the same cup at the last. Both went to the home appointed for all living. Both went to that place where rich and poor meet together. Dust they were, and unto dust they returned.

This is the lot of all men. It will be our own unless the Lord shall first return in glory. After all our scheming, and contriving, and planning, and studying,—after all our inventions and discoveries, and scientific attainments,—there remains one enemy we cannot conquer and disarm, and that is death. The chapter in Genesis, which records the long lives of Methuselah and the rest which lived before the flood, winds up the simple story of each by two expressive words, "he died." And now, after 4800 years, what more can be said

of the greatest among ourselves? The histories of Marlborough, and Washington, and Napoleon, and Wellington, arrive at just the same humbling conclusion. The end of each, after all his greatness, is just this, "he died."

Death is a mighty leveller. He spares none, he waits for none, and stands on no ceremony. He will not tarry till you are ready. He will not be kept out by moats, and doors, and bars, and bolts. The Englishman boasts that his home is his castle, but with all his boasting, he cannot exclude death. An Austrian nobleman forbade death and the small-pox to be named in his presence. But, named or not named, it matters little, in God's appointed hour death will come.

One man rolls easily along the road in the best appointed carriage. Another toils wearily along the path on foot. Yet both are sure to meet at last in the same home.

One man, like Absalom, has fifty servants to wait upon him and do his bidding. Another has none to lift a finger to do him a service. But both are travelling to a place where they must lie down alone.

One man is the owner of hundreds of thousands. Another has scarce a shilling that he can call his own property. Yet neither one nor the other can carry one farthing with him into the unseen world.

One man is the possessor of half a county. Another has not so much as a garden of herbs. And yet two paces of the vilest earth will be amply sufficient for either of them at the last.

One man pampers his body with every possible delicacy, and clothes it in the richest and softest

apparel. Another has scarce enough to eat and seldom enough to put on. Yet both alike are hurrying on to a day when "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," shall be proclaimed over them, and fifty years hence none shall be able to say, "this was the rich man's bone and this the bone of the poor."

Reader, I know that these are ancient things. I do not deny it for a moment. I am writing stale old things that all men *know*. But I am also writing things that all men do not *feel*. Oh! no! if they did feel them, they would not speak and act as they do.

You wonder sometimes at the tone and language of ministers of the Gospel. You marvel that we press upon you immediate decision. You think us extreme and extravagant, and ultra in our views, because we urge upon you to close with Christ, to leave nothing uncertain, to make sure that you are born again and ready for heaven. You hear, but do not approve. You go away, and say to one another: "The man means well, but he goes too far."

But do you not see that the reality of death is continually forbidding us to use other language? We see him gradually thinning our congregations. We miss face after face in our assemblies. We know not whose turn may come next. We only know that as the tree falls there it will lie, and that "after death comes the judgment." We must be bold and decided, and uncompromising in our language. We would rather run the risk of offending some, than of losing any. We would aim at the standard set up by old Baxter,—

> "I'll preach as though I ne'er should preach again,
> And as a dying man to dying men!"

We would realize the character given by Charles II, of one of his preachers: "That man preaches as though death was behind his back. When I hear him I cannot go to sleep."

Oh! that men would learn to live as those who may one day die! Truly it is poor work to set our affections on a dying world and its short-lived comforts, and for the sake of an inch of time to lose a glorious immortality! Here we are toiling, and labouring, and wearying ourselves about trifles, and running to and fro like ants upon a heap; and yet after a few years we shall all be gone, and another generation fill our place. Live for eternity, reader. Seek a portion that can never be taken from you. And never forget John Bunyan's golden rule, "He that would live well, let him make his dying day his company-keeper."

IV. Observe, in the next place, *how precious a believer's soul is in the sight of God.*

The rich man, in the parable, dies and is buried. Perhaps he had a splendid funeral,—a funeral proportioned to his expenditure while he was yet alive. But we hear nothing further of the moment when soul and body were divided. The next thing we hear of is that he is in hell.

The poor man, in the parable, dies also. What manner of burial he had we know not. A pauper's funeral among men is a melancholy business. The funeral of Lazarus was probably no better. But this we do know, that the moment Lazarus dies he is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, —carried to a place of rest, where all the faithful are waiting for the resurrection of the just.

Reader, there is something to my mind very striking, very touching, and very comforting in

this expression of the parable. I ask your especial attention to it. It throws great light on the relation of all sinners of mankind who believe in Christ, to their God and Father. It shows a little of the care bestowed on the least and lowest of Christ's disciples, by the King of kings.

No man has such friends and attendants as the believer, however little he may think it. Angels rejoice over him in the day that he is born again of the Spirit. Angels minister to him all through life. Angels encamp around him in the wilderness of this world. Angels take charge of his soul in death, and bear it safely home. Yes! vile as he may be in his own eyes, and lowly in his own sight, the very poorest and humblest believer in Jesus is cared for by his Father in heaven, with a care that passeth knowledge. The Lord has become his shepherd, and he can want nothing. Only let a man come unfeignedly to Christ, and he shall have all the benefits of a covenant ordered in all things and sure.

Is he laden with many sins? Though they be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow.

Is his heart hard and prone to evil? A new heart shall be given to him, and a new spirit put in him.

Is he weak and cowardly? He that enabled Peter to confess Christ before His enemies, shall make him bold.

Is he ignorant? He that bore with Thomas' slowness, shall bear with him, and guide him into all truth.

Is he alone in his position? He that stood by Paul when all men forsook him, shall also stand by his side.

Is he in circumstances of special trial? He that enabled men to be saints in Nero's household, shall also enable him to persevere.

The very hairs of his head are all numbered. Nothing can harm him without God's permission. He that hurteth him, hurteth the apple of God's eye, and injures a brother and member of Christ Himself.

His trials are all wisely ordered. Satan can only vex him as he did Job, when God permits him. No temptation can happen to him above what he is able to bear. All things are working together for his good.

His steps are all ordered from grace to glory. He is kept on earth till he is ripe for heaven, and not one moment longer. The harvest of the Lord must have its appointed proportion of sun and wind, of cold and heat, of rain and storm. And then when the believer's work is done, the angels of God shall come for him as they did for Lazarus, and carry him safe home.

Ah! reader, the men of the world little think whom they are despising, when they mock Christ's people. They are mocking those whom angels are not ashamed to attend upon. They are mocking the brethren and sisters of Christ Himself. Little do they consider that these are they for whose sakes the days of tribulation are shortened. These are they by whose intercession kings reign peacefully. Little do they reck, that the prayers of men like Lazarus have more weight in the affairs of nations, than hosts of armed men.

Believers in Christ who read this tract, you little know the full extent of your privileges and possessions. Like children at school, you

know not half your Father is doing for your welfare. Learn to live by faith more than you have done. Acquaint yourselves with the fulness of the treasure laid up for you in Christ even now. This world, no doubt, must always be a place of trial while we are in the body. But still there are comforts provided for the brethren of Lazarus, which many never enjoy.

V. Observe, in the last place, *what a dangerous and soul-ruining sin is the sin of selfishness.*

You leave the rich man in the parable, in a hopeless state. If there was no other picture of a lost soul in hell in all the Bible, you have it here. You meet him in the beginning, clothed in purple and fine linen. You part with him at the last, tormented in the everlasting fire.

And yet there is nothing to show that this man was a murderer, or a thief, or an adulterer, or a liar. There is no reason to say that he was an atheist, or an infidel, or a blasphemer. For anything we know, he attended to all the ordinances of the Jewish religion. But we do know that he was lost for ever.

There is something to my mind very solemn in this thought. Here is a man whose outward life in all probability was correct. At all events we know nothing against him. He dresses richly; but then he had money to spend on his apparel. He gives splendid feasts and entertainments; but then he was wealthy, and could well afford it. We read nothing recorded against him that might not be recorded of hundreds and thousands in the present day, who are counted respectable and good sort of people. And yet the end of this man is that he goes to hell. Surely this deserves serious attention.

I believe it is meant to teach us *to beware of living only for ourselves.* It is not enough that we are able to say, "I live correctly. I pay every one his due. I discharge all the relations of life with propriety. I attend to all the outward requirements of Christianity." There remains behind another question, to which the Bible requires an answer. "To whom do you live, to yourself or to Christ? What is the great end, aim, object, and ruling motive in your life?" Let men call the question extreme if they please. For myself, I can find nothing short of this in St. Paul's words, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 15.) And I draw the conclusion that if, like the rich man, we live only to ourselves, we shall ruin our souls.

I believe further, that this passage is meant to teach us *the damnable nature of the sins of omission.* It does not seem that it was so much the things the rich man did, but the things he left undone, which made him miss heaven. Lazarus was at his gate and he let him alone. But is not this exactly in keeping with the history of the judgment in the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew? Nothing is said there of the sins of commission, of which the lost are guilty. How runs the charge?—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." (Matt. xxv. 42, 43.) The charge against them is simply that they did not do certain things. On this their sentence turns. And I draw the con-

clusion again, that except we take heed, sins of omission may ruin our souls. Truly it was a solemn saying of good Archbishop Usher on his death-bed, "Lord, forgive me all my sins, but specially my sins of omission."

I believe further that the passage is meant to teach us that *riches bring special danger with them.* Yes! riches, which the vast majority of men are always seeking after,—riches for which they spend their lives, and of which they make an idol,—riches entail on their possessor immense spiritual peril. The possession of them has a very hardening effect on the soul. They chill. They freeze. They petrify the inward man. They close the eye to the things of faith. They insensibly produce a tendency to forget God. And does not this stand in perfect harmony with all the language of Scripture on the same subject? What says our Lord? "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark x. 23, 25.) What says St. Paul? "The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. vi. 10.) What can be more striking than the fact that the Bible has frequently spoken of money as a most fruitful cause of sin and evil? For money Achan brought defeat on the armies of Israel, and death on himself. For money Balaam sinned against light, and tried to curse God's people. For money Delilah betrayed Samson to the Philistines. For money Gehazi lied to Naaman and Elisha, and became a leper. For money Ananias

and Sapphira became the first hypocrites in the early church, and lost their lives. For money Judas Iscariot sold Christ, and was ruined eternally. Surely these facts speak loudly.

Money, in truth, is one of the most *unsatisfying* of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt. But it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it. There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it. Two-thirds of all the strifes, quarrels, and lawsuits in the world, arise from one simple cause, —money.

Money most certainly is one of the most *ensnaring and heart-changing* of possessions. It seems desirable at a distance. It often proves a poison when in our hand. No man can possibly tell the effect of money on his soul, if it suddenly falls to his lot to possess it. Many an one did run well as a poor man, who forgets God when he is rich.

Reader, I draw the conclusion, that those who have money, like the rich man in the parable, ought to take double pains about their souls. They live in a most unhealthy atmosphere. They have double need to be on their guard.

I believe, not least, that the passage is meant *to stir up special carefulness about selfishness in these last days*. You have a special warning in 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2. "In the last days perilous times shall come: For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous." I believe we have come to the last days, and that we ought to beware of the sins here mentioned, if we love our souls.

Perhaps we are poor judges of our own times. We are apt to exaggerate and magnify their evils, just because we see and feel them. But after every allowance, I doubt whether there ever was more need of warnings against selfishness than in the present day. I am sure there never was a time when all classes in England had so many comforts and so many temporal good things. And yet I believe there is an utter disproportion between men's expenditure on themselves and their outlay on works of charity and works of mercy. I see this in the miserable one guinea subscriptions to which many rich men confine their charity. I see it in the languishing condition of many of our best religious societies, and the painfully slow growth of their annual incomes. I see it in the small number of names which appear in the list of contributions to any good work. There are, I believe, thousands of rich people in this country, who literally give away nothing at all. I see it in the notorious fact that few, even of those who give, give anything proportioned to their means. I see all this, and mourn over it. I regard it as the selfishness and covetousness predicted as likely to arise in the last days.

Reader, I know that this is a painful and delicate subject. But it must not on that account be avoided by the minister of Christ. It is a subject for the times, and it needs pressing home. I desire to speak to myself, and to all who make any profession of religion. Of course I cannot expect worldly and utterly ungodly persons to view this subject in Bible light. To them the Bible is no rule of faith and practice. To quote texts to them would be of little use.

But I do ask all professing Christians to consider well what Scripture says against covetousness and selfishness, and on behalf of liberality in giving money. Is it for nothing that the Lord Jesus spoke the parable of the rich fool, and blamed him because he was not "rich towards God?" Is it for nothing that in the parable of the sower He mentions the deceitfulness of riches as one reason why the seed of the Word bears no fruit? Is it for nothing that He says, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness?" Is it for nothing that He says, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just?" Is it for nothing that He says, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth?" Is it for nothing that He says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" Is it for nothing that He warns us against the example of the priest and Levite, who saw the wounded traveller, but passed by on the other side? Is it for nothing that He praises the good Samaritan, who denied himself to shew kindness to a stranger? Is it for nothing that St. Paul classes covetousness with sins of the grossest description, and denounces it as idolatry? And is there not a striking and painful difference between this language and the habits and feelings

of society about money? I appeal to any one who knows the world. Let him judge what I say.

Reader, I only ask you to consider calmly the passages of Scripture to which I have referred. I cannot think they were meant to teach nothing at all. That the habits of the East and our own are different, I freely allow. That some of the expressions I have quoted are figurative, I freely admit. But still after all, a principle lies at the bottom of all these expressions. Let us take heed that this principle is not neglected. I wish that many a professing Christian in this day, who perhaps dislikes what I am saying, would try to write a commentary on these expressions, and try to explain to himself what they mean.

To know that alms-giving cannot atone for sin is well. To know that our good works cannot justify us is excellent. To know that we may give all our goods to feed the poor, and build hospitals and cathedrals, without any real charity, is most important. But let us beware lest we go into the other extreme, and because our money cannot save us, give no money away at all.

Has any one money who reads these pages? Then take heed and beware of covetousness. Remember you carry weight in the race towards heaven. All men are naturally in danger of being lost for ever, but you are doubly so because of your possessions. Nothing is said to put out fire so soon as earth thrown upon it. Nothing, I am sure, has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money. It was a solemn message which Buchanan, on his deathbed, sent to his old pupil, James I., "He was going to a place where few kings and great men

could come." It is possible, no doubt, for you to be saved as well as others. With God nothing is impossible. Abraham, Job, and David were all rich and yet saved. But Oh! take heed to yourself. Money is a good servant, but a bad master. Let that saying of our Lord's sink down into your heart, "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of God." Well said an old divine, "The surface above gold mines is generally very barren." Well might old Latimer begin one of his sermons before Edward the VI. by quoting three times over our Lord's words, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," and then saying, "What if I should say nothing else these three or four hours?" There are few prayers in our Litany more wise and more necessary than that petition, "In all time of our *wealth*, good Lord deliver us."

Has any one little or no money who reads this paper? Then do not envy those who are richer than yourself. Pray for them. Pity them. Be charitable to their faults. Remember that high places are giddy places, and be not too hasty in your condemnation of their conduct. Perhaps if you had their difficulties you would do no better yourself. Beware of the love of money. A man may love it and not have it. Beware of the love of self. It may be found in a cottage as well as in a palace. And beware of thinking that poverty alone will save you. If you would sit with Lazarus in glory, you must not only have fellowship with him in suffering but in grace.

Does any reader desire to know the remedy against that love of self, which ruined the rich man's soul, and cleaves to us all by nature like

our skin? I tell him plainly there is only one remedy, and I ask him to mark well what that remedy is. It is not the fear of hell. It is not the hope of heaven. It is not any sense of duty. Oh! no! The disease of selfishness is far too deeply rooted to yield to such secondary motives as these. Nothing will ever cure it but an experimental knowledge of Christ's redeeming love. You must know the misery and guilt of your own estate by nature. You must experience the power of Christ's atoning blood sprinkled upon your conscience, and making you whole. You must taste the sweetness of peace with God through the mediation of Jesus, and feel the love of a reconciled Father shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost.

Then, and not till then, the mainspring of selfishness will be broken. *Then*, knowing the immensity of your debt to Christ, you will feel that nothing is too great and too costly to give to him. Feeling that you have been loved much when you deserved nothing, you will heartily love in return, and cry, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" Feeling that you have freely received countless mercies, you will think it a privilege to do anything to please Him to whom you owe all. Feeling that you have been bought with a price, and are no longer your own, you will labour to glorify God with body and spirit, which are His.

Yes! reader, I repeat it this day. I know no effectual remedy for the love of self, but a believing apprehension of the love of Christ. Other remedies may palliate the disease: this alone will heal it. Other antidotes may hide its deformity:

this alone will work a perfect cure. An easy, good-natured temper may cover over selfishness in one man. A love of praise may conceal it in a second. A self-righteous asceticism and an affected spirit of self-denial may keep it out of sight in a third. But nothing will ever cut up selfishness by the roots but the love of Christ revealed to the mind by the Holy Ghost, and felt in the heart by simple faith. Once let a man see the full meaning of the words, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me," and then he will delight to give himself to Christ, and all that he has to His service. He will live to Him, not in order that he may be secure, but because he is secure already. He will work for Him, not that he may have life and peace, but because life and peace are his already.

Go to the cross of Christ, all you that want to be delivered from the power of selfishness. Go and see what a price was paid there to provide a ransom for your soul. Go and see what an astounding sacrifice was there made that a door to eternal life might be provided for poor sinners like you. Go and see how the Son of God gave Himself for you, and learn to think it a small thing to give yourself to Him.

Reader, the disease which ruined the rich man in the parable may be cured. But oh! remember, there is only one real remedy. If you would not live to yourself, you must live to Christ. See to it that this remedy is not only known, but applied,—not only heard of, but used.

1. And now let me conclude all by urging on *every reader of this tract, the great duty of self-inquiry.* A passage of Scripture like this parable ought surely to raise in many an one great search-

ings of heart.—"What am I? Where am I going? What am I doing? What is likely to be my condition after death? Am I prepared to leave the world? Have I any home to look forward to in the world to come? Have I put off the old man and put on the new? Am I really one with Christ, and a pardoned soul?" Surely such questions as these may well be asked when the story of the rich man and Lazarus has been heard. Oh! that the Holy Ghost may incline many a reader's heart to ask them!

2. In the next place, *I invite* all readers who desire to have their souls saved, and have no good account to give of themselves at present, to seek salvation while it can be found. I do entreat you to apply to Him, by whom alone men can enter heaven, and be saved,—even Jesus Christ the Lord. He has the keys of heaven. He is sealed and appointed by God the Father to be the Saviour of all that will come to Him. Go to Him in earnest and hearty prayer and tell Him your case. Tell Him that you have heard that He receiveth sinners, and that you come to Him as such. Tell Him that you desire to be saved by Him in His own way, and ask Him to save you. Oh! that you may take this course without delay. Remember the hopeless end of the rich man. Once dead there is no more change.

3. Last of all, *I entreat* all professing Christians to encourage themselves in habits of liberality towards all causes of charity and mercy. Remember that you are God's stewards, and give money liberally, freely, and without grudging, whenever you have an opportunity. You cannot keep your money for ever. You must give

account one day of the manner in which it has been expended. Oh! lay it out with an eye to eternity, while you can.

I do not ask rich men to leave their situations in life and go into the work-house. I ask no man to neglect his worldly calling, and to omit to provide for his family. Diligence in business is a positive Christian duty. Provision for those dependent on us, is proper Christian prudence. But I ask all to look around continually, as they journey on, and to remember the poor,—the poor in body, and the poor in soul. Here we are for a few short years. How can we do most good with our money, while we are here? How can we so spend it as to leave the world somewhat happier and somewhat holier when we are removed? Might we not abridge some of our luxuries? Might we not lay out less upon ourselves, and give more to Christ's cause and Christ's poor? Is there none we can do good to? Are there no sick, no poor, no needy whose sorrows we might lessen, and whose comforts we might increase? Such questions will never fail to elicit an answer from some quarter. I am thoroughly persuaded that the income of every religious and charitable society in England might easily be multiplied tenfold, if English Christians would give in proportion to their means.

There are none surely to whom such appeals ought to come home with such power as professing believers in the Lord Jesus. The parable of the text illustrates our position by nature, and our debt to Christ. We all lay, like Lazarus, at heaven's gate, sick unto the death, helpless, and starving. Jesus came forth to relieve us. Jesus gave Himself

for us, that we might have hope and live. For a poor Lazarus-like world He came down from heaven, and humbled Himself to become a man. For a poor Lazarus-like world He went up and down doing good, caring for men's bodies as well as souls, until He died for us on the cross.

I believe that in giving to support works of charity and mercy, we are doing that which is according to Christ's mind,—and I ask readers of this tract to begin the habit of giving, if they never began it before; and to go on with it increasingly, if they have begun.

I believe that in offering a warning against covetousness, I have done no more than bring forward a warning called for by the times, and I ask God to bless the consideration of this tract to many souls.

I REMAIN

YOUR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

J. C. RYLE.

Helmingham, Stoneham,

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